10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

141 Young people of both sexes are attractive and robust
[146] but hard work, undernourishment and, in the case of the women, constant child-bearing often make them appear old when they have only reached what should be the prime of life.

591 Family life among the Karens is not unlike that of
428 the ordinary European family. They do not have the
● 596 patriarchial family system of the Chinese, and each married couple usually has its own house in which to live. Often the woman brings her young husband to live with her parents and he inherits their lands on their decease.
582 Marriage in the early days was strictly within the tribe.
163 Even marriage with those of other Karen tribes was looked
165 down upon. Karen women usually bear as many as ten or more children, but often raise less than half of them,
858 due to their lack of knowledge of sanitation. Karen
888 fathers are usually fond of their children and take as good care of them as they know how. Their love is generally sentimental and children are allowed to rule the household. Old people usually receive good care for the Karens always reverence age.

IV

OCCUPATIONS

243 In the early days the Karens were concerned with
433 wresting a living for themselves from the ground where they lived. Almost without exception they were cultivators of the soil and raised rice, their principal food. They followed the two methods usually found in Burma, the mountain method in the hills and the paddy-field method on the plains.

243 In the hills the wasteful way of cultivating rice was that of clearing a section, called in Burmese a *taung-ya*,

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

the purpose of improving the conditions and keeping their crops from being ruined. Failure to observe this custom brings disappointment ("t' kle t htwa"), for one's labor will be worse than useless. On the plains, where they prepare a dirt threshing-floor after the Burman style, it used to be prohibited to drive a cart across it or to walk on it with shoes on. In other sections, where the threshing is done on a great mat, no one may step on it but the members of the family who take part in the work. The succulent shoots of vegetables, which are grown with the paddy, must not be cut with a sharp knife or other instrument, inasmuch as cutting would endanger the "k'la" or life principle of the paddy and scare away the demons that preside over the fields. Both the vegetables and their shoots, the latter being largely used for greens, must be plucked with the fingers. Another tabu prevents the eating of flesh during harvest-time. Any family who should transgress this precept would find, it is believed, that their supply of rice had vanished from the storage bin.

The following examples of tabus relating to domestic animals may be cited. If a sow or bitch has a litter composed only of females, they must all be killed. When less than three chicks are hatched from a nest of eggs, they must be killed. So also must the chick whose down dries fast to the feathers of the mother hen. A crowing hen is likewise doomed to death. These phenomena are supposed to be signs of weakness in the creatures concerned, for which some offended demon is responsible. Such weakness must not be allowed to spread.

Certain tabus contribute to preserve the integrity of the family through the female line. One of these prevents any outsider from entering a house where the family is celebrating the "Bgha" feasts. Indeed, a tabu debars from such gatherings the men who have married into the family, while those who are privileged to attend must remain in the house during the performance of the rites.

On the plains, where the Karen villagers build separate houses after the manner of the Burmans, persons are forbidden to drive their carts through the village road close enough to the houses to bump against the supporting posts. This tabu, which, in the eyes of a Westerner, partakes of the nature of a town ordinance, is enforced upon the offender by the imposing of a fine, namely, four annas in money or a fowl, payable to the heads of the household con-